MEMORIAL

OF

EDWARD P. LESCURE,

PAST MASTER

PHŒNIX LODGE, No. 130,

F. & A. M.

MASONIC TEMPLE,
PHILADELPHIA, March 21st, 1883.

Meeting of March *Phœnix Lodge, 130, A. Y. M.*—The Worshipful Master announced, in very feeling terms, the sudden and alarming illness of our beloved Secretary, EDWARD P. LESCURE, with expressions of his sincere hope that his valued life may yet be spared to his family, and to the Lodge.

Meeting of April 18th, 1883.—The Worshipful Master announced, in feeling language, the death of Brother Past Master EDWARD P. LESCURE, for so many year Secretary of this Lodge, and paid a high tribute to his character.

On motion of Brother Samuel H. Davis, Jr., duly seconded, it was

Resolved, That, out of respect to the memory of our late Brother Past Master EDWARD P. LESCURE, Secretary of this Lodge, the Lodge be draped for the usual period of six months.

Remarks were made by Brothers Past Masters C. B. Barrett, I. W. Van Houten and Daniel Sutter, referring to the death of our late Secretary, Brother Past Master EDWARD P. LESCURE.

Brother C. B. Barrett moved that a Committee of five be appointed, including the elective officers of the Lodge, to prepare a suitable memoir of our late Brother EDWARD P. LESCURE.

Brother Lloyd B. Hoppin moved, as an amendment, that the Worshipful Master appoint a Committee of five for the object mentioned. The amendment being accepted, the motion was unanimously adopted.

The Worshipful Master appointed Brothers Past Masters Charles B. Barrett, Edward Strickland, John L. Young, Isaac W. Van Houten, and Daniel Sutter, the Committee on Memorial.

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MEMORIAL.

There is in the life and character of an upright, sincere and true Freemason, both a lesson and an example. It is of these that the jewels of Freemasonry are made. The world can know nothing of the Craft, but as the principles it inculcates are exemplified in the lives of those who are accepted as its acknowledged advocates, therefore it is of high importance to chronicle and preserve the record of the lives of Brethren of the Mystic Tie who have by their walk in the world "put to silence the ignorance of foolish men" who regard detraction as the element of criticism.

Many there are, even in this day, who occupy themselves in maligning both Freemasons and Freemasonry. It is the habit of ignorance to prove itself, unintentionally, by discussing subjects it does not comprehend. To refute such attempts is only giving importance to what, of itself, is without a claim to serious notice.

The best and most conclusive demonstration of the real character of Freemasonry is to be found in the lives of its devoted adherents.

Following this thought, we have, in obedience to the wish of the members of Phœnix Lodge, of F. and A. M., No. 130, of Philadelphia, in language free from rhetorical ornament, given a sketch of the life of a departed Brother, who, living, was a high examplar of the practice of Masonic virtue, and in his death a witness to Masonic faith.

Edward P. Lescure, was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on November 18th, 1797, and died April 6th, 1883, in the 86th year of his age. His father, Guillaume de Lescure, was born at Blays, a fortified town in the south of France, near the city of Bordeaux, and being a royalist, emigrated to the Island of St. Domingo, West Indies, about the commencement of the French Revolution of 1789, and being of large wealth he engaged extensively in mercantile pursuits.

The mother of the subject of the Memoir was Marie Rosalie de Champagne (veuve Lartigne)

who was born in Philadelphia about the year 1767, and who, while on a visit to the Island of St. Domingo, met the merchant, Guillaume de Lescure, and they were married in the year 1790. During the year 1791 the negroes on the Island rose against the whites, and the insurrection becoming general lasted ten days, and during that time all the white residents who could be found were massacred. The servants of Guillaume de Lescure were faithful, and secreted him and his wife, with a few others, until the rebellion was suppressed by a French fleet, and an arrangement made with the negro General Toussaint L'Ouverture, by which all the whites who had escaped death were permitted to leave. Taking advantage of the opportunity offered, the parents, with an infant born during the insurrection (the elder brother of the subject of this memoir), embarked for America, leaving behind them all their property, and being robbed of a casket containing jewels and money, on their way to the vessel. They settled in Philadelphia, with the other French refugees, where, as before stated, EDWARD P. LESCURE was born, in 1797.

Young LESCURE entered the naval service of his country when only a lad of 17 years, during the war of 1812 and 1814, between this country and Great Britain; he sailed in an American privateer called the *Chasseur*, which was gallantly commanded, and soon distinguished herself by capturing several prizes. Having, after a hard-fought battle, captured a British frigate, young LESCURE, with a number of others, were placed on board the prize to bring her into port; but, falling in with a British cruiser, and having no means of defence, was easily captured and made prisoners of war, and after spending four months as prisoner on British men-of-war, he was incarcerated in Dartmoor Prison, in England, for a period of seven months, and was present at the Dartmoor massacre of American prisoners, April 6th, 1815, and very narrowly escaped being killed.

When a youth, before entering the naval service, he had attended a school kept by Mr. James Hughes, in Philadelphia, and there received an excellent education; being a good student, he made rapid progress in his studies, and acquired a solid foundation upon which

to gather much useful knowledge in after years.

On his release from Dartmoor Prison, and return to this country, after a short visit to his mother in Philadelphia, he went to Baltimore, where he apprenticed himself to learn the business of a silversmith. His employer, observing his industrious habits, took a fancy to him, and being the possessor of a fine library, gave the lad permission to go there and read, when at leisure; and often, when his work was done, he would be seen engaged in industriously endeavoring to improve his mind and store it with valuable information.

Having finished his apprenticeship, and become a skilled workman, he returned to Philadelphia, his native city, and, when quite a young man, engaged in the silverware and jewelry business, and by strict attention to business and great perseverance, soon acquired a large and profitable trade; when, in the full tide of success, and on the high road to fortune, he met with a great reverse, viz; the complete and outrageous robbery of his store at the corner of Third and Market streets, in the year 1840.

Burglars watched their opportunity, and one rainy Sunday morning broke into the store through a basement, and carried away, in an old-fashioned country wagon, the greater portion of a large stock of gold watches, diamonds, silverware and jewelry, their plunder amounting to more than $20,000.

Unfortunately for Mr. LESCURE his goods were never recovered, having been removed to England and sold by the thieves.

Notwithstanding his reverses Mr. LESCURE did not yield to despair, but rented a small store and endeavored to carry on his business again; but about this time the Bank of the United States failed, and a wide-spread panic was caused, which extended over the whole United States, and all branches of trade became terribly depressed. Mr. LESCURE endeavored to maintain himself in this crisis, but his resources having been exhausted by the robbery and the trial of the robbers, he was forced for want of capital to relinquish his business and accept the position of Inspector of Customs in the port of Philadelphia. He advanced to the position of Superintendent of Inspectors, and

continued to hold that office for a period of twenty years, during various changes of the political parties.

During the War of the Rebellion he was appointed a member of the clerical force in the Medical Purveyor's Department in Philadelphia by Surgeon George E. Cooper, then in charge, and continued in that position under various army surgeons, until the close of the war made such an establishment unnecessary. He did not long remain idle, but obtained an appointment in the accounting and disbursment department of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, and for seventeen years, up to the commencement of his illness, on February 22d, 1883, which terminated in his death April 6th of same year. During the time of his occupancy of his last position he performed most faithfully and satisfactorily the responsible duty of keeping the accounts of the check department of the great corporation.

Brother LESCURE united himself with the Masonic Fraternity in the year 1838, during the prevalence of the high Anti-Masonic feeling then prevailing. He was initiated in Phœnix

Lodge, No. 130, F. and A. M., April 18th, 1838 Crafted May 22d, 1838, and Raised July 18th, 1838.

He was elected Worshipful Master of his Lodge on December 15th, 1841. Frequently, for several years after his retirement from the station of Worthy Master, he by request officiated *pro tempore*, and performed the work of the Lodge. He obtained his work from Charles Schnider, father of the late Wm. B. Schnider, for many years Grand Tyler of the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania, at that time an authority on work, and became one of the best skilled workmen in the Fraternity. Often when strangers visited the Temple, and it was known by the Grand Tyler that Brother LESCURE was to do the work, he would say, if you want to see good work go to Phœnix Lodge, "LESCURE is going to do it;" thus the Lodge maintained its creditable reputation, and many visiting Brethren from other jurisdictions attended its meetings.

Brother LESCURE was elected Secretary of the Lodge on December 19th, 1849, and up to the time of his death, a period of thirty-three years,

he continued to perform the duties of his office with marked fidelity and correctness. A few years ago, beginning to feel his advancing age, and imagining that, perhaps, a change was desired, and a younger Brother preferred by the Lodge, in a few remarks thanking the Brethren for the courtesy and affectionate consideration he had received at their hands for so many years, he declined a re-election; but the opposition to his retirement was so strong, and the manifestations of respect and esteem so unmistakable, that he at last consented to the will of the Lodge, and was again, by a unanimous vote, elected Secretary.

In the year 1846, he was appointed a member of the Board of Stewards of the Stephen Girard Charity Fund, and elected President of the Board in 1851, and presided over the weekly meetings of that body for over twenty years, absent but once or twice during that period, and the absence being occasioned by sickness. Feeling the weight of years upon him, he resigned the Presidency in 1871, when he was presented with a handsomely engrossed and framed set of resolutions by the Right Worshipful Grand

Lodge of Pennsylvania, as a testimonial of their appreciation of his long and valuable services.

He was a Past High Priest of Harmony Royal Arch Chapter, No. 52, becoming a life member June 5th, 1840.

He was very active as a Royal Arch Mason, and rose to the highest honors, the following being among the elected and appointed offices of the Grand Chapter of Pennsylvania, held by him at different periods of his life:

Grand Master of Second Veil, December 27th, 1842.

Grand Master of Third Veil, December 27th, 1843.

Grand Captain of the Host, December 27th, 1844, 1845, 1846, 1847.

Grand Scribe, December 27th, 1848.

Grand King, December 27th, 1849, 1850.

Most Excellent Grand High Priest, December 27th, 1851, 1852.

Brother LESCURE had an excellent constitution, seldom being sick during a long and active life. He was of cheerful and affectionate disposition, fond of his home and family, a lover of

music and of the old songs, which he remembered with unfailing memory. A lover of poetry and the drama, when a young man, frequently composed verses which were deemed worthy of publication by the newspapers of the day; he was called the "Chester Bard."

Generous and charitable, sympathetic, exceedingly temperate and regular in his habits; he rose year after year at five in the morning, retiring at ten o'clock at night.

Punctual, never deferring a duty or task until the next day, if it could be performed. One of his mottoes was "Procrastination is the thief of time," and he governed himself accordingly.

He was of forgiving nature, never harboring malice or ill-will toward any one.

One cannot read this history of the life of our departed and honored Brother, without a feeling of gratitude that such men have not lived in vain. Every Freemason, as he follows

this recital, will rejoice that a record has been made for instruction and benefit of the Craft. Society gains by these records in knowing that a Fraternity of men is built up of the best material for its welfare, security and influence, and the Craft gains in having preserved for its use such examples of its real work.

The unostentatious life and faithful devotion to those cardinal virtues which are the true elements of a lasting reputation, which marked the more than three-quarters of a century of Brother EDWARD P. LESCURE'S period of longevity, are to his Brethren of Phœnix Lodge, No. 130, F. and A. M., not only a legacy to be faithfully administered, but a lesson to be studied and an example to be followed.

In the coming time this Lodge can point to Brother LESCURE'S long life, and admonish those who come within its portals so to live in the Craft, that the world may know that Masonry only publishes its principles in the lives of the Brethren.

Let us all, therefore, take heed how we live—and how we walk through life, for, as one of America's greatest poets has written—

Lives of good men all remind us,
We should make our lives sublime,
And, while passing, leave behind us,
Footsteps on the sands of time;
Footsteps that, perhaps another,
Sailing o'er life's troubled main—
Some forlorn and weary brother—
Seeing, may take heart again.